REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 3, 4, and 8 and adds new claim 10. Therefore, claims 1-10 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nakagawa et al. (U.S. Patent 6,168,519, hereinafter "Nakagawa"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claims 1 and 2

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Nakagawa allegedly teaches all the features of claim 1.

However, Nakagawa neither teaches nor suggests "related match selection means for selecting at least one match, from the plurality of matches, taking place at least partially at the same virtual time as a main match a player's team is taking part in as one or more matches related to the main match based on virtual start times for each match decided by the virtual start time deciding means, the at least one selected match being different from the main match," as recited in claim 1. This is because Nakagawa does not disclose selecting a match, different from a main match, that occurs at the same time as the main match. Rather, Nakagawa merely describes selecting a single match.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner asserts that the claims do not provide a reason why "a related match" and the "main match" could not be the same. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 now requires that "the at least one selected match being different from the main match."

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Nakagawa fails to teach or suggest all the features of claim 1, and hence claim 1 and its dependent claims would not have been anticipated by Nakagawa for at least these reasons.

Claims 3 and 4

Claims 3 and 4 recite features similar to those discussed above regarding claim 1, and hence claims 3 and 4 would not have been anticipated by Nakagawa for at least analogous reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Nakagawa, in view of Sabaliauskas (U.S. Patent 5,359,510). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Sabaliauskas is merely cited for teaching a virtual time, a virtual date, and a competition ladder, and fails to cure the deficient disclosures of Nakagawa discussed above regarding the rejection of claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Therefore, even if Nakagawa could have somehow been modified based on Sabaliauskas, as the Examiner asserts in the Office Action, the combination would still not contain all the features of claims 1-4. Accordingly, claims 1-4 would not have been rendered unpatentable by the combination of Nakagawa and Sabaliauskas for at least these reasons.

Claims 5-9 depend on claim 1 and incorporate all the features of claim 1. Again, even if Nakagawa could have somehow been modified based on Sabaliauskas, as the Examiner asserts in the Office Action, the combination would still not contain all the features in claim 1, and hence

claims 5-9, as discussed above. Accordingly, claims 5-9 would not have been rendered unpatentable by the combination of Nakagawa and Sabaliauskas for at least these reasons.

New Claims

As discussed above, Applicant adds new claim 10, which is at least supported by FIG. 4 of the specification. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 should be deemed patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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